Categorisation of chalk as minor mineral

1402. SHRI KANJIBHAI PATEL: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether any proposal by the State Government of Gujarat was sent to Central Government to consider Chalk as minor mineral instead of major mineral;

(b) if so, the date on which the proposal was sent to Government; and

(c) the present status of the same?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES (DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY) (a): Yes, Sir.

(b) The Central Government has received the proposal on 25.7.2006.

(c) No final decision has been taken in the matter.

Exploration of diamonds in Mahanadi River-bed

1403. SHRI SURENDRA LATH: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that diamonds have been explored in Mahanadi river-bed especially in Hirakund of Orissa;

(b) if so, what is the details thereof location-wise; and

(c) the steps taken and proposed to be taken for exploration of diamond from this area?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINES (DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY): (a): to (c) Yes, Sir. Search for diamond bearing rocks (Kimberlite, Lamproite) in Mahanadi river bed (from the entry point of the river Mahanadi in the State of Orissa to the Hirakud Reservoir and up to the confluence with Tel river in the State of Orissa) has been carried out by GSI. Ground evaluation of the airborne and remote sensing data related to diamond investigation has also been carried out by the GSI in parts of Jharsuguda, Sambalpur and Sundergarh districts of Orissa. However, the source rock for diamond has not yet been discovered.